34. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 33, and its complement, wherein the isolated nucleic acid comprises the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 28.

35. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 33, and its complement, wherein the isolated nucleic acid comprises nucleotides 21-2531 of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 28.

36. An isolated nucleic acid from cassava, and its complement, wherein the isolated nucleic acid encodes an amino acid sequence which has sufficient starch branching enzyme activity in *E. coli* KV832 to complement the starch branching enzyme mutation therein.

37. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 36, and its complement, wherein the isolated nucleic acid has at least 88% sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 28.

ES 38. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 36, and its complement, wherein the isolated nucleic acid comprises the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 28.

39. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 36, and its complement, wherein the isolated nucleic acid encodes a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 29.

40. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 36, and its complement, wherein the isolated nucleic acid comprises nucleotides 21-2531 of the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 28.

41. An isolated nucleic acid and its complement, wherein the isolated nucleic acid encodes at least an effective portion of a polypeptide having starch branching enzyme Class A (SBEII) activity and the amino acid sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 29, and wherein the effective portion has sufficient starch branching enzyme activity in *E. coli* KV832 to complement the starch branching enzyme mutation therein.

42. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 34, further comprising a 5' and/or a 3' untranslated region.

43. A nucleic acid isolated from cassava, wherein the nucleic acid has at least 88% sequence identity with the DNA sequence of SEQ. ID. NO. 28, operably linked in the sense or anti-sense orientation to a promoter operable in plants, said nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide having starch branching enzyme Class A (SBE II) activity.

44. An isolated nucleic acid according to claim 43, comprising at least 300-600 bp.

45. A replicable nucleic acid construct comprising a nucleic acid according to claim 43.

46. A method of altering the expression of a gene naturally present in a plant host cell, said gene encoding a polypeptide having SBE II activity, the method comprising introducing into the cell the nucleic acid of claim 43, operably linked in the sense or anti-sense orientation to a suitable promoter active in the host cell, and causing transcription of the introduced nucleic acid to produce a transcript, said transcript and/or a translation product thereof being sufficient to interfere with the expression of the gene naturally present in the host cell, thereby altering the expression of the gene.

47. The method of claim 46, further comprising the step of regenerating the altered host cell into a plant or plantlet.

48. A plant or plantlet produced by the method of claim 47.

49. A method according to claim 46, wherein the host cell is selected from the group consisting of a cassava cell, banana cell, potato cell, pea cell, tomato cell, maize cell, wheat cell, barley cell, oat cell, sweet potato cell and rice plant cell.

50. A method according to claim 46, further comprising the introduction of one or more additional nucleic acids, operably linked in the sense or anti-sense orientation to a suitable promoter active in the host cell, and causing transcription of the one or more additional nucleic

acids to produce a transcript, said transcript and/or a translation product thereof being sufficient to interfere with the expression of a gene(s) naturally present in the host cell.

51. A method according to claim 50, wherein the one or more additional nucleic acids interfere with the expression of a gene involved in starch biosynthesis.

52. A method according to claim 50, wherein the additional nucleic acid comprises a portion of an SBE I gene effective to interfere with the expression of an SBE I gene naturally present in the host cell.

53. A method according to claim 50, wherein the additional nucleic acid comprises a portion of a cassava SBE I gene effective to interfere with the expression of an SBE I gene naturally present in the host cell.

54. A method according to claim 50, wherein the host cell is selected from the group consisting of cassava cell, banana cell, potato cell, pea cell, tomato cell, maize cell, wheat cell, barley cell, oat cell, sweet potato cell and rice cell.

55. A method according to claim 50, wherein the introduced nucleic acid inhibits expression of the gene naturally present in the host cell and wherein the altered host cell gives rise to starch which contains less branching compared to starch from an unaltered cell.

56. A method according to claim 50, further comprising the step of regenerating the altered host cell into a plant or plantlet.

57. A method of obtaining starch having altered properties, comprising regenerating a plant from an altered host cell according to the method of claim 56, and extracting the starch therefrom.